

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 HA-05 IO-13 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01
/109 W

-----094154 240014Z /73/17

P R 230820Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7327
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE POUCH
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC
USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 5099

CINCPAC AND CINCEUR FOR POLAD

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR PARA TWO

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, PK, US
SUBJECT: JOURNALISTS' STRIKE IN PAKISTAN

REF: A) STATE 126516 (NOTAL), B) ISLAMABAD 4917, C) ISLAMABAD
4773, D) ISLAMABAD 4641, E) ISLAMABAD 4549, F) ISLAMABAD
4349

1. MUSAWAAT CLOSURE: EMBASSY HAS REPORTED (REFS B THRU F) ON THE
CONTINUING STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION (MLA)
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AND THE STRIKING JOURNALISTS
RELATED TO THE MLA'S CLOSURE OF THE
LAHORE EDITION OF THE PAKISTAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (PPP) VERNACULAR
DAILY MUSAWAAT. DEPARTMENT'S PRESS GUIDANCE REQUIRES THREE SMALL
UPDATES:

A. AS OF 22 MAY, MORE THAN SEVENTY-THREE DEMONSTRATORS

ARRESTED IN LAHORE HAVE RECEIVED SENTENCES FROM SUMMARY MILITARY COURTS FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE JOURNALISTS' STRIKE; A GRADUALLY INCREASING NUMBER ARE BEING SET FREE WITH A "WARNING;"

B. AS FAR AS WE KNOW, CANINGS WERE NOT RPT NOT CARRIED OUT IN PUBLIC, BUT TOOK PLACE IN THE PRISON WHERE THE CONVICTED JOURNALISTS ARE UNDER DETENTION; AND,

C. ONE OF THE FOUR DEMONSTRATORS SENTENCED TO LASHES IN LAHORE 13 MAY (REF C) WAS EXCUSED FROM THEIR ADMINISTRATION BECAUSE OF HIS AGE AND PHYSICAL DISABILITY. THUS A TOTAL OF FIVE DEMONSTRATORS (THREE IN LAHORE; TWO IN HYDERABAD) HAVE RECEIVED BETWEEN THREE AND FIVE LASHES EACH IN CONNECTION WITH THE STRIKE; THE REST OF THOSE SENTENCED HAVE RECEIVED FINES UP TO RS. 10,000 AND SENTENCES RANGING FROM THREE MONTHS TO ONE YEAR AT HARD LABOR ("RIGOROUS IMPRISONMENT," AS IT IS CALLED IN THE PAKISTAN PENAL CODE).

2. IN A SIGNIFICANT NEW DEVELOPMENT WHICH MAY, AT LAST, HOLD THE PROMISE OF A GOVERNMENT-JOURNALISTS COMPROMISE, THE ACTING PRESIDENT OF THE PUNJAB UNION OF JOURNALISTS, MR. MAHMOOD JAFRI, ANNOUNCED, ON MAY 21, THE FORMATION OF A FOUR-MEMBER COMMITTEE, WITH HIMSELF AS LEADER, TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE GOVERNMENT ON THE MUSAWAAT ISSUE. THE PUJ COMMITTEE WAS APPARENTLY FORMED IN RESPONSE TO A GOP INVITATION. ACCORDING TO THIS MORNING'S NEWSPAPERS, THE TALKS WILL TAKE PLACE LATER TODAY. CONFIDENTIAL

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3. US ACTIONS: AMB USED AN ALREADY-SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT WITH GOP SECRETARY-GENERAL-IN-CHIEF GHULAM ISHAQ 22 MAY TO RAISE OUR CONCERN OVER THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM ARISING FROM THE JOURNALISTS' STRIKE. WE SUGGEST THAT THE DEPARTMENT CONSIDER AN APPROACH AT THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL TO THE PAK EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, WHICH SHOULD BE SENSITIVE ALREADY TO US PRESS COVERAGE. WE COULD THEN FOLLOW UP WITH THDAMFA HERE IF CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANT. HUMMEL

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Message Attributes

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